



MEDIA RELEASE

"NOCHE DE LA FAMILIA" FAMILY NIGHT BEGINS AT SOLVANG LIBRARY A Monthly Bilingual Story Time and a Healthy Snack -- Starts May 31!

Santa Barbara, CA – May 14, 2012.

The Solvang Library is partnering with several community organizations to present "Noche de la Familia," a uniquely themed monthly series of programs aimed at early learning with families. The program will kick off on Thursday May 31st at 5:30 pm with "Soup and Stories." This first Family Night will revolve around agriculture, food, seeds, and sprouting of plants and ideas. Children will participate in a bilingual story time (with their parents beside them!) and then enjoy some soup together.

"Noche de la Familia" is an Early Learning with Family program whose goal is to encourage and support families with young children. Parents are the very first teachers for their children during the early childhood years- the program aims to help them have fun and gain confidence in themselves in this role, and to learn about resources available to them through the public library system. "Our one-hour event will offer stories (in Spanish and English), games, and art to feed your imagination, and each "Family Night" will finish with something delicious," says Luis Ramirez, a local artist and now library staffer, whose first assignment at Solvang Library is to help create this program. Luis has worked in many area schools through Arts Outreach, a nonprofit community arts organization based in the Santa Ynez Valley. "As I come from a bilingual immigrant family, I am excited to reach out to families just like mine."

The structure of this storytime hour is unique in that part of the evening will focus on discovering and tasting healthy food. "We're aware that parents who work can't always get to our morning storytime hours, and also that evening programs can be difficult to attend when they occur around the dinner hour," said Carey McKinnon of the Solvang Library. "Luckily, we have found a great partner in Women's Environmental Watch (WE-Watch) and its Healthy Alternatives Committee member, Nicole Peña." Nicole, a longtime valley resident and previous owner of both the Sanja Cota Market and Santa Ynez Valley Florist, will be planning and presenting the nutrition portion of the program. She and her committee, founded in 1992, work with local schools to bring awareness of fresh and nutritious cooking to children. "It is a perfect committee for me because of my belief that children should be taught about good simple food as early as possible -- I grew up and worked in professional kitchens with a father who was a pastry chef, so I always understood food should be home made, and home grown when possible."

Funding for this new program is being provided by both The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Foundation and the Valley Foundation, through grants to the Friends of the Library of Santa Ynez Valley. Special thanks are also due to People Helping People for assistance with concept and communications.

Family time will continue each month through the Fall on the following dates: June 21st, July 19th, August 16th, September 20th, and October 25th. Some of the upcoming themes include Latin American Vegetable Art! (Dip into some Diego, Crunch some Kahlo!); and Cowboys and Cowgirls and Chiles!

The Family Night is free, but participants are encouraged to call the library at [805 688-4214](tel:8056884214) with any questions or concerns. This event is best for families with children up to 6 or 7 years old, but all are welcome.

The Solvang Library is a branch of the Santa Barbara Public Library System, and is located at 1745 Mission Drive in Solvang. All programs are free and open to the public. For more information please call the library at 805 688-4214, or visit www.sbplibrary.org

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Santa Barbara Public Library System web site: <http://www.sbplibrary.org>

Friends of the Library of Santa Ynez Valley www.folsyv.com

Women's Environmental Watch www.we-watch.org

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